

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A probe for detecting near-field light or irradiating near-field light, comprising:
 - a cantilever having first and second ends, and being supported at said the first end by a substrate and having said the second end free;
 - a hollow tip formed at said the free end of said cantilever, said tip having an end;
 - a microaperture for utilizing near field light formed at said the end of said tip; and
 - a groove formed inside said cantilever, said groove comprising a hollow waveguide and a mirror,
wherein said the mirror reflects the light entering from the microaperture toward the hollow waveguide or reflects the light transmitted in said the hollow waveguide toward said microaperture.

2. (Currently Amended) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said the waveguide has a V-shaped transversal cross section.

3. (Currently Amended) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said
the waveguide has a trapezoidal transversal cross section.

4. (Currently Amended) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said
the waveguide has a U-shaped transversal cross section.

5. (Original) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said tip is
shaped as a square cone.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said cantilever
is principally composed of silicon.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein said
the mirror is a concave mirror.

10.-16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A surface observation apparatus utilizing near field light provided with at least one probe selected from the group consisting of probes according to any one of Claims 1 to 5, 7 and 9.

18. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus utilizing near field light provided with at least one probe selected from the group consisting of probes according to any one of Claims 1 to 5, 7 and 9.

19. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus utilizing near field light provided with at least one probe selected from the group consisting of probes according to any one of Claims 1 to 5, 7 and 9.

20.-22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A probe according to Claim 1, wherein said the mirror [[is]] has a slanted face.

24. (Previously Presented) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein a light toward the microaperture reflected by the mirror generates near field light in the vicinity of the microaperture.

25. (Previously Presented) The probe according to Claim 1, wherein a

light toward the hollow waveguide reflected by the mirror is a propagating light passing through the microaperture.